

REMARKS

The claims now pending in the application are Claims 1 to 21, Claim 1 is the only independent claim. Claims 1 to 6, 9, 14 and 18 to 21 have been amended herein.

In the Official Action dated January 30, 2004, Claims 1 to 7, 9 and 17 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b), as anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 4,873,572 (Miyazaki), and Claim 10 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a), as unpatentable over the Miyazaki '572 patent. Claims 8, 11 to 13, 15 and 16 variously were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a), as unpatentable over the Miyazaki '572 patent in view of one of PCT patent document no. WO 93/11631, U.S. Patent No. 6,157,420 (Nakanishi), and U.S. Patent No. 5,565,914 (Motta). Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections respectfully are requested in view of the above amendments and the following remarks.

Initially, Applicant gratefully acknowledges the Examiner's indication that the application contains allowable subject matter, and that Claims 14 and 18 to 21 are allowable over the prior art.

The rejections of the claims over the cited art respectfully are traversed. Nevertheless, without conceding the propriety of the rejections, Claims 1 to 6, 9, 14 and 18 to 21 have been amended herein more clearly to recite various novel features of the present invention, with particular attention to the Examiner's comments. Support for the proposed amendments may be found in the original application. No new matter has been added.

The present invention relates to a novel image pickup apparatus. In one aspect, as now recited in independent Claim 1, the image pickup apparatus comprises first and second image pickup portions for receiving at least a first wavelength component of an object light and a second wavelength component of the object light different from the first wavelength component, respectively, and first and second optical systems for projecting the object light onto the first and second image pickup portions, respectively, via different optical paths, the second optical system projecting the object light also onto the first image

pickup portion (e.g., 700, 702). Guide path forming portions (e.g., 821) are arranged correspondingly with the first and second image pickup portions, respectively, so that each of the guide path forming portions receives the object light including the first and second wavelength components and provides different guide paths thereto, respectively, so as to guide the wavelength component from the optical system corresponding to each of the guide path forming portions among the received first and second wavelength components onto the image pickup portion corresponding to each of the guide path forming portions (e.g., Figs. 18 to 22).

As disclosed in greater detail in the present application, this configuration avoids cross talk between the first and second image pickup portions, because the first and second image pickup portions receive different wavelength components of the object light, respectively.

Applicant submits that the prior art fails to anticipate the present invention. Moreover, Applicant submits that there are differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art, such that the subject matter taken as a whole would not have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made.

The Miyazaki '572 patent relates to an electronic endoscope apparatus, and discloses an endoscope apparatus comprising two image forming optical systems provided in an elongated insertable part, and an integrating imaging device provided in the tip part of the insertable part and having two imaging regions in which object images are formed by two image forming optical systems; for example, one solid state image state device having two imaging regions, or two solid state imaging devices which are provided integrally. However, Applicant submits that the Miyazaki '572 patent fails to disclose or suggest at least the above-described features of the present invention. Specifically, Applicant submits that the Miyazaki '572 patent fails to disclose or suggest the guide path forming portions, as disclosed and claimed in the present application (Claim 1). Rather, the Miyazaki '572

patent discloses an apparatus including first and second optical systems (see, e.g., elements 15 and 16) and corresponding image pickup portions (see, e.g., elements 21 and 22). The Miyazaki '572 patent further illustrates in Figure 20 a structure in which each of prism 283a and 283b is arranged between each of the lenses 282a and 282b, and the image pickup portion 285, merely to change an optical path of the object light passing through the lens. Thus, Applicant submits that the Miyazaki '572 patent fails to disclose or suggest providing different guide paths to different wavelength components included in incident object light, respectively, so as to guide the different wavelength components on to different image pickup portions, respectively, as disclosed and claimed in the present application. That is, the Miyazaki '572 patent is not understood to disclose or suggest the claimed guide path forming portions (Claim 1).

For the above reasons, Applicant submits that independent Claim 1 is allowable over the cited art.

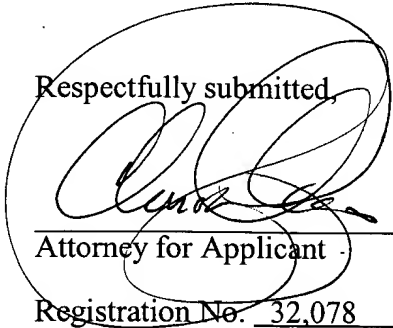
Claims 2 to 21 depend from Claim 1 and are believed allowable for the same reasons. Moreover, each of these dependent claims recites additional features in combination with the features of independent Claim 1, and is believed allowable in its own right. Individual consideration of the dependent claims respectfully is requested.

In a formal matter, by separate paper filed concurrently herewith, Applicant has submitted an Information Disclosure Statement identifying additional art cited during prosecution of copending application no. 09/604,964. Applicant has reviewed this art and believes the pending claims are allowable thereover.

Applicant believes that the present Amendment is responsive to each of the points raised by the Examiner in the Official Action, and submits that the application is in allowable form. Favorable consideration of the claims and passage to issue of the present application at the Examiner's earliest convenience earnestly are solicited.

Applicant's undersigned attorney may be reached in our Washington, D.C. office by telephone at (202) 530-1010. All correspondence should continue to be directed to our below listed address.

Respectfully submitted,



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